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The Initial Period of War: A Soviet View

William K. Baker

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objective, favoring instead a "harmonization of member objectives" between governments and replacement of the outdated Common Agricultural Policy "by an equivalent commitment to a high technology industrial policy with its dual implications for defense and civilian applications." What he seeks in the Western response to the Soviet Union is a coordinating mechanism stronger than the European NATO structure, weaker than political union. Rallo's thesis falls in the general category of "toward literature," pointing to a distant goal without offering the specifics of a plan for attainment. The author's ponderous writing style requires special diligence by the reader, an effort not always worthwhile, and hence sharply limits the book's value to the strategist or policymaker.

Defending Europe is a report on the proceedings of a conference on "European Security Requirements" and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks held at University College, University of Toronto, on 6-7 May 1985. Both NATO and Warsaw Pact countries were represented. If participants overbalanced toward positions favored by peace activists, the discussions were nevertheless lively and substantive, offering considerable thought to the effects of technology on policy and strategy. General Bernard Rogers' "Long Term Planning Guidelines for FOFA" (Follow-on Forces Attack) met close scrutiny, including critical Soviet views. The undesirability of spending heavily on

FOFA emerged quite strongly. Most participants saw the Strategic Defense Initiative as pure fantasy; the deployment of cruise missiles and Pershings to Europe was more opposed than supported. The MBFR talks raised considerable discussion, largely on the frustrations of both sides over incompatible approaches to problems having both political and military complexities. As generally happens when East and West sit down together in discussion, the hard questions are raised by both sides; and they remain unanswered by both sides.

PAUL SCHRATZ
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Ivanov, S.P. (chief author). *The Initial Period of War: A Soviet View*. Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1986. 311pp. \$9.50

The authors of this study state their purpose as "Based on the investigation and summary of data on the entry of the major capitalist nations and the Soviet Union into World War II—examining the more complex problems from the initial period of armed confrontations and in disclosing general trends in the preparation and conduct of initial operations, trends which were characteristic of World War II and have not lost their importance today." That task the authors certainly meet, albeit with characteristic historical license.

This study commences with a background of the evolution of initial

operations beginning with the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century, mobilization normally occurred after the declaration of war, but with World War I, mobilization came nearer the heels of the declaration of hostilities. World War I also introduced the airplane, armored cavalry and added mobility to land warfare. The initial period of World War II was generally characterized as the German-Italian-Japanese (Fascist Axis) offensive and the Anglo-French defensive.

According to the authors, the Anglo-French strategy was to channel the Fascist offensive eastward against the Soviet Union with the hope that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union would destroy each other. France fell and, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the English and Americans were all the more hesitant to enter the war in a big way.

Of course, there is truth in this assessment, yet no real enlightenment. One begins to see parallels between the past and the present when the discussion turns to the methods the Germans employed to mass an army and to use diplomacy prior to launching World War II. The recounting of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in many ways shows the lessons were well learned.

First, the Germans gradually placed their economy on a wartime footing. Mobilization took place in stages and with much political and operational deception. Offensive power was massed, concentrated,

and employed, encircling and destroying or capturing large formations before they could respond. Airborne troops attacked supply lines while aircraft assaulted other deep targets. The German Army met with remarkable success.

While the authors treat the deployment mistakes of the French quite evenhandedly, they work overtime in allowing history to be kind to Soviet mistakes. Rather than focusing on the inefficiencies of the Red Army and the alienation of Soviet citizens by harsh German policies, the authors tout the praises of the Soviet system. Correct they are in one regard, the Soviet system of centralized planning and programming is conducive to an efficient wartime economy.

But rather than concentrate on the expected historical discrepancies, the reader should see in this book the points of each strategy (Fascist or Anglo-French) given favor. For example, the Anglo-U.S. policy of having the Soviets provide the bulk of the manpower receives a tone of admiration; and in spite of the embittered rhetoric, the German-Japanese policies and methods are those employed by the Soviets today. Large standing armies, masses of armor, liberal use of espionage and disinformation—all of these are typical.

Regardless of the altered history and plentiful rhetoric, *The Initial Period of War* is, at minimum, a reasonable recounting of the diplomatic maneuvering and mobilization in the early days of World War II. At

best, it is a brief glimpse into the Soviet strategy of mobilization and the early part of armed conflict. The key themes one gets from that glimpse are that mass and maneuver will yield the desired results—either overwhelming victory or an early decisive engagement.

WILLIAM K. BAKER
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy

Deist, Wilhelm, ed. *The German Military in the Age of Total War*. Leamington Spa, England: Berg Publishers, 1985. 362pp. \$42.50

For much of the 1970s, the West German Defense Ministry's Military Historical Research Office at Freiburg was a well-kept secret. Happily this is no longer the case. Its superb journal, *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* and its projected ten-volume history of the Second World War—now nearly half completed and contracted to Oxford University Press for an English-language edition—have firmly established the office and its major scholars.

This welcome anthology permits a group of distinguished historians, either affiliated with the office or closely associated with it, to present concise synopses of their larger German works to Anglo-American readers. It is first and foremost a collection that stresses the broader political, economic, strategic, and ideological setting of the military in Germany. In approach and analysis, the Freiburg group has truly led the way towards what one may reason-

ably call the "new" military history; drum and trumpet sagas, mercifully, are not its concern.

The "glue" that holds the contributions together is a general belief in Germany's failure in the twentieth century to bring aims and resources into proper relation to each other, as well as a constant overestimation of its own capabilities and a corresponding underestimation of the adversary's: hubris in full bloom. In the opening essay, Wolfgang Petter analyzes the disastrous armaments policy of Wilhelmian Germany and its concern with potential domestic opposition. Lothar Burchardt follows similar lines by suggesting that the Kaiser's government failed to put the nation on a secure war footing. Hitler would strive to remedy this failure by seeking a balance between production for the war and for the civilian population in order to maintain domestic stability. Rolf-Dieter Müller traces the German preparations for chemical warfare between 1919 and 1945, concluding that while Hitler's decision not to use it may be seen as "a model case of working deterrence," the discussions behind its development revealed a "shocking unscrupulousness" on the part of politicians, industrialists, and military leaders both in Germany and elsewhere. Müller's uneasy conclusion is that "unpredictable factors and individuals" accounted for its nonuse.

Wolfram Wette suggests that even Weimar Germany was beset by a fatalistic fascination with war, while Michael Geyer reiterates his thesis